

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 9, 12-14, and 17-25 are all the claims pending in the application. By this Amendment, Applicant (1) cancels claims 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 15, and 16, and (2) adds new claims 18-25, which respectively correspond to claims 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 13, 14, and 17. New claims 18-22, 24, and 25 depend from claim 12 (which is rewritten in independent form), while new claim 23 depends from claim 1.

The Examiner rejects claims 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 12, and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by US 5,077,912 to Ogawa et al. ("Ogawa"); claims 3, 6, 9-11, 15, and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Ogawa; claim 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Ogawa in view of US 6,270,938 to Gandini et al. ("Gandini"); and claims 5 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Ogawa in view of US 5,380,612 to Kojima et al. ("Kojima"). Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections in view of the following remarks.

A. *Base Claim 1:*

Base claim 1, which is amended for clarification, recites (among other things):

*changing a condition of heating of the second heating means while
the support is being conveyed*

An exemplary embodiment of this feature is discussed throughout the specification. For example, see Table 4 at page 48, and the description of Table 4 found on page 49. At least this feature (in combination with the other claim limitations) is not taught or suggested by the prior art relied upon by the Examiner.

The Examiner asserts that Ogawa discloses each and every feature of the invention defined by claim 1. In so doing, the Examiner compares Ogawa's heating roller 9 to the second heating means of the present invention. This rejection is incorrect for the following reasons.

With reference to Fig. 1 of Ogawa, the disclosed device does include a hot air drying apparatus 8, which is located at an upstream position, and a heating roller 9, which is located at a downstream position. The drying apparatus 8 and the heating roller 9 sequentially dry the coating on a web 1 that is conveyed from a feed roll 2 to a take up roll 3. However, Ogawa does not indicate that the heating conditions of the second heating means are changed while the web 1 is being conveyed. In view of this lack of disclosure, those skilled in the art would expect Ogawa to follow the conventional approach discussed in the present specification. Namely, and with reference to Table 3 (at p. 48 of the specification), the conventional wisdom is to maintain constant heating conditions while the support (or web) is being conveyed. And if the heating conditions are to be changed (e.g., by adjusting the conveying speed), then the production line must be stopped to ensure quality.

Applicant respectfully asserts that the secondary references do not make up the deficiencies of Ogawa noted above.

B. Claim 12:

Applicant rewrites claim 12 in independent form, and to recite (among other things):

*supplying a plurality of supports that have different dimensions ...;
changing a condition of heating the supports and photosensitive
coated layers by the second heating means in accordance with the
thicknesses and the widths of the supports.*

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appln. No. 09/895,264 (~~Q64664~~)

In the Office Action (the paragraph bridging p. 2-3), the Examiner indicates that the above limitations (if positively recited) would define over the prior art. Claim 12 is believed to be appropriately amended to capture the allowable subject matter.

For these reasons, Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 1 and 12 are patentable, and that claims 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 13, 14, 17, and 18-25 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependencies.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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APPENDIX
VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 15, and 16 have been canceled.

The claims are amended as follows:

1. (Amended) A method for manufacturing a lithographic printing plate, the method comprising:

~~a drying and heating step wherein, while a strip shaped~~conveying a support, on which a photosensitive coating solution containing an organic solvent is coated such that a photosensitive coated layer is formed by the photosensitive coating solution,~~is continuously conveyed;~~

drying the photosensitive coated layer is dried by a first heating means to a dry-to-touch state;

~~and heating the support and the photosensitive coated layer are heated~~ by a second heating means provided at a downstream side of the first heating means so that hardening of the photosensitive coated layer is promoted; and

changing a condition of heating of the second heating means while the support is being conveyed.

2. (Amended) A method for manufacturing a lithographic printing plate according to claim 1, wherein the first heating means ~~is a drying step in which~~heats the photosensitive coated layer ~~is heated~~ to 90°C or more.

3. (Amended) A method for manufacturing a lithographic printing plate according to claim 1, wherein the first heating means ~~is a drying step in which~~ dries the photosensitive coated layer such that a remaining amount of the organic solvent in the photosensitive coated layer is 5 wt% or less of the photosensitive coated layer ~~which is substantially completed dried.~~

9. (Amended) A method for manufacturing a lithographic printing plate according to claim 1, wherein ~~at~~ the condition of heating by the second heating means is controlled in accordance with a type of the photosensitive coated layer formed on the support, such that a temperature of the photosensitive coated layer immediately after heating by the second heating means is a predetermined temperature which is set in accordance with the type of the photosensitive coated layer.

12. (Amended) A method for manufacturing a lithographic printing plate ~~according to claim 1,~~ the method comprising:

~~wherein in a case in which~~ thicknesses and widths supplying a plurality of supports that have different dimensions ~~supplied to the second heating means continuously change,~~ each of the supports being coated with a photosensitive coating solution containing an organic solvent such that a photosensitive coated layer is formed by the photosensitive coating solution;
drying the photosensitive coated layer by a first heating means to a dry-to-touch state;

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appln. No. 09/895,264 (Q64664)

heating the support and the photosensitive coated layer by a second heating means provided at a downstream side of the first heating means so that hardening of the photosensitive coated layer is promoted;

changing a condition of heating the supports and photosensitive coated layers by the second heating means ~~changes~~ in accordance with the thicknesses and the widths of the supports.

17. (Amended) A method for manufacturing a lithographic printing plate according to claim ~~15~~ 1, further comprising, at a down stream side of the cooling step, a step of forming an overcoat layer on the photosensitive coated layer.

Claims 18-25 are added as new claims.